

Robert's Rules: Selected Items of Interest
Compiled by Patrick Wilson, September 2007 (revised January 2009)

Procedural Matters

- Principal motions and amendments should be in writing if required by the presiding officer.
- Speeches should be addressed to the chair, not the assembly.
- Any decision of the chair (e.g., on a point of order) can be appealed and (if seconded) put to a vote.
- To avoid even the appearance of partisanship, if the chair wants to participate in debate he or she should temporarily relinquish the chair until the vote is taken.

Extending Debate

- The maker of a motion has a right to be the first to speak on it.
- No speaker can be interrupted by the chair, by a call to adjourn (unless the statutory time for adjournment has arrived), or by a call for the previous question.
- Anyone eligible to speak can seek recognition from the chair right up until voting has commenced.
- Anyone can change his or her (non-ballot) vote before the result of the voting has been announced.
- Any question already voted upon can be reconsidered the same day by anyone who voted on the prevailing side.
- Anyone can move to take from the table a question tabled earlier in that meeting or at the previous meeting.

Curtailing Debate

- Anyone can object to the consideration of a question before it has been debated, thereby avoiding it altogether (no second, undebatable, 2/3 vote).
- Anyone can move to postpone a question indefinitely, thereby either killing it immediately or gauging the opposition to it.
- Anyone can move to limit the number or length of speeches or to close debate after a specified time (requires second, undebatable, 2/3 vote).
- No one can speak to a question a second time if anyone who hasn't spoken to it wishes to.
- No one can speak more than twice to a question (except those merely asking questions or making simple suggestions).